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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Maryland's Howard Community College (HCC) to examine employers' views of the job readiness and vocational preparation of HCC graduates. The study sample included 55 employers of 1985 HCC graduates who agreed to have their employer contacted. The nursing program had the highest representation in the study sample, which included nine employers of nursing graduates. Study findings, based on a 53% response rate (N=29), included the following: (1) 96% of the responding employers rated the graduates as adequate or more than adequate in the performance of job skills; (2) 93% of the employers felt the graduates were able to learn new techniques and work well with others; (3) 89% thought that graduates' communication with superiors was adequate or more than adequate; (4) the quality of the work produced by the graduates was rated as good or very good by 89% of the respondents; (5) the work attitude of the graduates was rated as good or very good by 92% of the employers; (6) 92% of the employers rated the vocational training received by the graduates as good or very good; and (7) 100% of the employers indicated that they would hire another HCC graduate. A list of HCC research publications is included. (EJV)

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Howard Community College

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS OF 1985 HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES

RESEARCH REPORT NUMBER 50

FEBRUARY 1988

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS OF 1985 HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES

RESEARCH REPORT NUMBER 50

FEBRUARY 1988

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Howard Community College

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS OF 1985
HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESEARCH (RESEARCH REPORT NUMBER 50)

TITLE: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS OF 1985 HCC GRADUATES

AUTHOR: Barbara B. Livieratos, Research Analyst

PURPOSE: The purpose of this report is to examine the responses to the Employer Survey to determine employers' views of the job readiness and vocational preparation of 1985 HCC graduates.

METHODOLOGY: The Employer Survey is carried out in conjunction with the Graduate Follow-up Survey. Responses are received only from employers of graduates who respond to the Follow-up Survey and who agree to have their employer contacted by the college. Of the 55 employers of 1985 graduates contacted, 29 (53%) responded to the Employer Survey. This report describes their responses to the survey questions.

FINDINGS: Overall, the graduates earned highly respectable ratings. In general, employers seemed to think that Howard Community College graduates had good training and were well prepared for their jobs. The findings detailed in the report show:

- Ninety-six percent of the employers responding to the survey rated the graduates as adequate or more than adequate in the performance of job skills.
- The work attitude of the graduates was seen as good or very good by most (92%) of the employers.
- Ninety-two percent of the employers surveyed rated the 1985 HCC graduates as having had good or very good vocational training.
- All (100%) of the employers who responded said that they would hire another HCC graduate.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS OF 1985 HCC GRADUATES

Employers' perceptions of Howard Community College graduates they hire may have concrete effects on their future hiring trends. Knowing what employers think about the HCC graduates they hire also has definite implications for the college's future program planning and operation. A mechanism for gauging employer opinion of graduates has been incorporated into the annual Graduate Follow-up Survey. Employed graduates who respond to the survey are asked if their employers may be contacted by the college. A survey is then sent to those employers. The discussion that follows includes employers of both full- and part-time employees who graduated from HCC in 1985.

There were 29 responses to the survey of the employers of 1985 HCC graduates. Of all the 1985 graduates (252), 152 (65%) responded to the Graduate Follow-up Survey. Of the number of respondents, 55 said that their employers could be contacted. Of the employers contacted, 29 (53%) responded. Shown below are some highlights of the survey of employers of 1985 HCC graduates.

Table One shows the program that graduates were in at HCC.

- The Nursing program had the highest representation in the survey (31%), with nine employers of Nursing graduates responding. This is somewhat higher than their representation in the 1985 graduating class, which was 21% of all graduates (54 of the 252 graduates). Proportionately more Nursing graduates, however, go directly into employment rather than transfer to another educational program.

- Employers of graduates of the Business Management program accounted for three (10%) of the surveys. The variety of other programs represented in the survey each had employers of only one or two graduates. These numbers are too small to make generalizations about programs, so no responses are broken down by program.

Employers were requested to rate the preparation of graduates in specific job related areas. **Table Two** and **Graph One** show the employer ratings in these areas. The "Adequate" and "More Than Adequate" categories used on the survey have been combined to simplify presentation and discussion of the data.

- Overall, the graduates earned high ratings. Fully 96% of the employers who responded rated the graduates as adequate or more than adequate in the performance of job skills.

- Most of the employers (93%) saw the graduates as being able to learn new techniques and as working well with others.

- Eighty-nine percent of the surveyed employers thought that graduates' communication with superiors was adequate or more than adequate.

- Familiarity with test or laboratory equipment was an item not applicable or not observed for 25% of the responding employers. Of those who did respond to that item, 95% gave the 1985 graduates they hired an adequate or better rating.

Employers were asked to give ratings on the vocational training received by the graduates as reflected in their technical knowledge, work attitude, and work quality. They were also requested to give an overall rating of the vocational training received by the graduates as it relates to the requirements of the job. Ratings given by employers on the 1985 graduates they hired are shown on **Table Three** and on **Graph Two**. A comparison of HCC graduates with other employees in the work group was made by employers and is shown on **Table Four**.

- The work attitude of the graduates was seen as good or very good by almost all of the employers who responded to that item (92%, or 24 of the 26 respondents).

- The quality of work the graduates was producing was rated as good or very good by 89% of the responding employers.

- A majority of the employers (88%) gave good or very good ratings to graduates on their technical knowledge.

- As an overall rating, 92% of the employers rated their 1985 graduates as having had good or very good vocational training.

- When asked to compare the preparation of HCC graduates with that of other employees, eight employers said that they had no basis for comparison. Of those who did make a comparison, 71% said that HCC graduates were better prepared than other employees, and 23% said they were the same.

- Twenty-seven employers responded to the question asking if they would hire another HCC graduate. All of them (100%) said they would.

On the whole, the results of the survey of employers of 1985 graduates are quite positive. One caveat to bear in mind is that these survey results are true only for the respondents to this survey and cannot be generalized to all employers of 1985 graduates. The positive findings, however, have remained consistent throughout the years the employer survey has been conducted. Employers' stated willingness to hire additional HCC graduates has remained at a high level.

TABLE ONE. PROGRAM AREA OF 1985 GRADUATES BY EMPLOYERS RESPONDING TO THE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

	PROGRAM	N	%
1.	Nursing	9	31.0%
2.	Business Management	3	10.0%
3.	Data Processing (AA)	2	6.9%
4.	General Studies	2	6.9%
5.	Vision Care Technology	2	6.9%
6.	Electronics Technology	2	6.9%
7.	Executive Secretarial	1	3.5%
8.	Biomedical Engineering Technology	1	3.5%
9.	Medical Secretarial	1	3.5%
10.	Legal Secretarial	1	3.5%
11.	Carpentry	1	3.5%
12.	Liberal Arts	1	3.5%
13.	Information Systems Management	1	3.5%
14.	Accounting	1	3.5%
15.	Data Processing (Certificate)	1	3.5%
TOTAL		29	100.1%

TABLE TWO. EMPLOYER RATINGS OF COLLEGE PREPARATION OF 1985 HCC GRADUATES

SPECIFIC AREAS	MORE THAN ADEQUATE/ ADEQUATE N	%	INADEQUATE N	%	NOT OBSERVED/ NOT APPLICABLE N	%
PERFORMANCE OF JOB SKILLS	27	96%	1	4%	0	-
ABILITY TO LEARN NEW TECHNIQUES ON THE JOB	26	93%	0	-	2	7%
ABILITY TO WORK WELL WITH OTHER EMPLOYEES	26	93%	0	-	2	7%
ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH SUPERIORS	25	89%	1	4%	2	7%
FAMILIARITY WITH EQUIPMENT REQUIRED BY THE JOB	20	71%	1	4%	7	25%

GRAPH ONE

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS WHO RATED 1985 HCC GRADUATES' PREPARATION AS ADEQUATE OR MORE THAN ADEQUATE

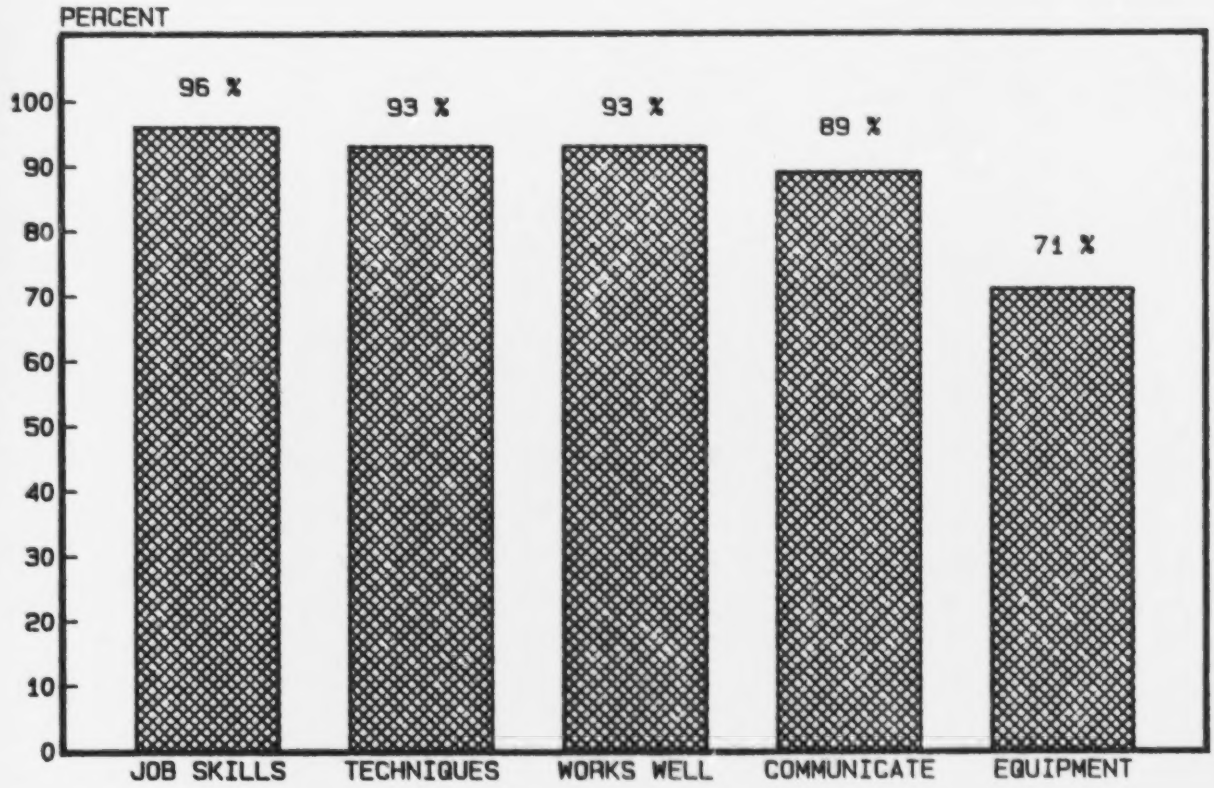

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TABLE THREE. EMPLOYER RATINGS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF 1985 GRADUATES IN SPECIFIC AREAS

SPECIFIC AREAS	VERY GOOD/ GOOD		NEUTRAL		VERY POOR/ POOR	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE	23	88%	3	12%	0	-
WORK ATTITUDE	24	92%	1	4%	1	4%
WORK QUALITY	24	89%	2	7%	1	4%
OVERALL RATING	24	92%	1	4%	1	4%

GRAPH TWO

EMPLOYER RATINGS OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF 1985 GRADUATES IN SPECIFIC AREAS

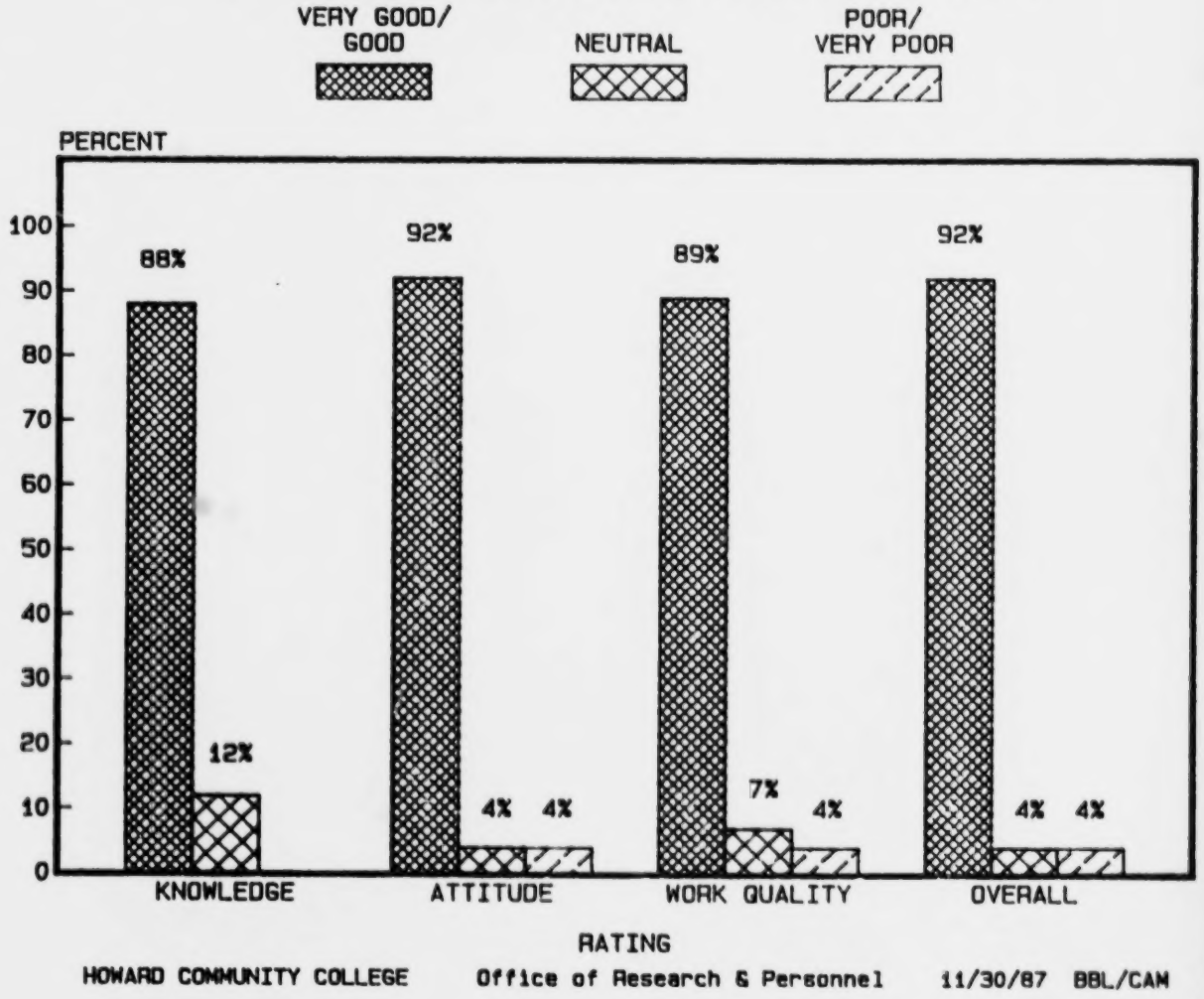

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TABLE FOUR. COMPARISON OF HCC GRADUATES' PREPARATION WITH OTHERS IN THE WORK GROUP SHOWN FOR ALL RESPONDENTS AND FOR ONLY THOSE WHO MADE A COMPARISON

ALL RESPONDENTS:	N	%	THOSE WHO MADE A COMPARISON:	N	%
Better Prepared	12	48%	Better Prepared	12	71%
Equally Prepared	4	16%	Equally Prepared	4	23%
Less Prepared	1	4%	Less Prepared	1	6%
No Basis for Comparison	8	32%			

WOULD EMPLOY ANOTHER HCC GRADUATE:	YES	NO
	27 (100%)	0 (0%)

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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